(e) the corrective steps Government proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM) (a) and (b) As per information received from field formations under CBEC, there are presently 42 cases in which there are allegations that the officer concerned secured the job by submitting fake caste certificate. In accordance with the Government instructions and judicial pronouncements on the subject, the District Authorities were requested to conduct enquiry in all the cases. Out of 42 cases, the enquiry by District Authorities is still continuing in 22 cases. Further, in 13 cases, the officers have filed court cases against the orders of the District Authorities and obtained stay. In the remaining 7 cases, after completion of enquiry by District Authorities, the disciplinary authorities under CBEC have initiated disciplinary proceedings against the concerned officers, which are at various stages of completion.

(c) and (d) As per the legal position, promotions or any other service benefit cannot be denied to an officer, till the caste certificate is proved to be false after the enquiry and the same is cancelled. Hence, it is true that some of the 42 officers referred to in (a) above have got promotions.

(e) Regarding the pending disciplinary proceedings, the concerned officials of the Department have been directed to complete the same on top priority basis in a time bound manner. Regarding the enquiries pending before the District Authorities and the case is pending before the courts (which are against the orders of the District Authorities), the matter is being followed up with the concerned State/District Autorities regularly to expedite the matter. Further, instructins have been issued to field formations to be careful in verifying the caste certificates of new recruits, so that such instances of fake caste certificates can be avoided in future.

Stock exchange for SMEs

4227. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up stock exchange for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how far this would help the fund-starved SMEs in the State to raise funds for expansion and diversification?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL) (a) to (c) No proposal has been received by SEBI to set up stock exchange for SMEs in Orissa. Setting up a stock exchange for the SME sector will facilitate small and medium enterprises to raise funds for their business needs.

Increase in food prices

4228. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that as per the estimate of International Monetary Fund (IMF), doubling of food prices over the last three years could potentially push 100 million people in low-income countries deeper into poverty;

(b) if so, what will be its impact in India and on essential commodities in the country;

(c) whether Government is also aware that a World Bank report has said that global wheat prices jumped 181 per cent over the 36 months to February, with overall food prices up 83 per cent; and

(d) if so, how Government proposes to deal with the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) Yes Sir. Containment of inflation along with maintenance of high economic growth are priority of the Government. Anti-inflationary policies of the government include strict fiscal discipline, rationalization of duties of essential items, effective supply-demand management of essential commodities through liberal tariff and trade policies, and procurement through public sector agencies. Government has also imposed export restrictions and eased imports to increase domestic availability of food-grains and other essential commodities to stabilize prices. As a long-term strategy to stabilize food prices, Government has also initiated the National Food Security 8 Mission to increase production of rice, wheat and pulses by 10 million tonnes, 8 million tonnes and 2 million tonnes, respectively. Further, to supplement Government's efforts and Reserve Bank of India has formulated the monetary policy to be conductive to economic growth, while attempting to contain inflationary expectations arising out of uncertainties in domestic and international environment.

Affordable rate of Wholesale Price Index

† 4229. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) option 3 per cent rate of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) in the country has been considered as affordable;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that during financial year 2007-08, this rate has been registering more than affordable rate of Wholesale Price Index as envisaged by RBI;

(d) if so, the months during which this rate has been more than affordable rate; and

(e) the average rate of the above during the remaining period of the year and details of the minimum and maximum rate during this period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (e) The Reserve Bank of India, in its Annual Policy Statement, 2008-09, issued on April 29, 2008, has stated that the policy endeavour would be to bring down inflation from the current level of above 7 per cent to around 5.5 per cent in 2008-09

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.